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## CAROLYN HESTER, TEXAS SONGBIRD

By: C. Ross Burns

During the early years of the folk music revival of the late 1950s and early 1960s, one of the leading female folksingers in the country was the Texas Songbird, Carolyn Hester. She used her soaring girlish soprano to breathe life into old traditional songs from the British Isles, the United States, and Mexico. She chose songs that had beautiful haunting melodies which her voice augmented. Following in the footsteps of Pete Seeger and Susan Reed, she worked with and learned from Buddy Holly, Paul Clayton, Bob Dylan, Tom Paxton, Judy Collins, Ian and Sylvia, and many of the folk singers of the period. Along with many of her cohorts, she was active in the civil rights movement as well. She has influenced subsequent female singer-songwriters, including Emmylou Harris, Joni Mitchell, and Nanci Griffith. In her native Texas, she has remained a strong supporter of folk music by serving on the board of directors and as a performer at the Kerrville Folk Festival for many years, and, at age 75, is still recording.

Born in Waco, Texas in 1937, Carolyn Hester grew up in a home filled with music. From her grandparents in Austin, she first heard old traditional songs including, "Lullabies, spirituals, mountain melodies, Appalachian songs."<sup>1</sup> Carolyn's father, attorney James Gordon Hester, was a fan of country music balladeer Burl Ives. He encouraged Carolyn's interest in music from a young age. As a teenager in the 1940s, she heard and was inspired to become a folksinger by Pete Seeger, the Weavers, and Susan Reed. The family relocated to Dallas, Texas where she began performing with The First Methodist Church choir.

The choir director was so impressed with her natural talent that the church paid for weekly voice lessons. These lessons required a one-hour bus ride across town after dark, a daunting challenge for the times. Dur-

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ing this period, she started teaching herself guitar and took lessons from local country musician Johnny Giles. She also began appearing at local talent shows including some broadcast on WFAA-TV.<sup>2</sup>

By the time she graduated from high school in 1955, the family had moved to Denver. She turned down a music scholarship from the University of Colorado to pursue an acting and singing career in New York City. While working days as a secretary, she took voice and guitar lessons and started to develop her own singing and playing style. She developed her song repertoire by frequenting the local branch library that had a large circulating collection of folk recordings. In addition, she often visited her aunt in Alexandria, Virginia to gain access to the Library of Congress' extensive collection of folk recordings. She also listened to fellow performers and their recommendations as well.

Meanwhile back out west, her family moved to Lubbock as Buddy Holly's career was taking off. Holly was promoted and managed by Norman Petty just across the border in Clovis, New Mexico. Ruth Hester, Carolyn's mother, sent Petty a penny postcard to set up an audition for Carolyn. Carolyn flew to Lubbock and drove the family car down the long dusty road to Clovis for the audition. Ruth came along to provide moral support. Petty liked what he heard and agreed to record her.<sup>3</sup>

Since Petty's echo chamber was a bay in his father's service station and garage next door, the recording sessions were held in the evenings. Carolyn's sessions had to be scheduled around Holly's schedule as well. Holly hung around during rehearsals taking snapshots of her in the studio.<sup>4</sup> In these sessions she was accompanied by her father on harmonica, Cricket drummer Jerry Allison playing brushes on cardboard, and George Atwood on bass. Atwood was a local player who supported other Petty protégés including Holly and Waylon Jennings. Petty persuaded the Coral label to issue Hester's album *Scarlet Ribbons* in 1957. With the exception of the title tune which was a pop tune written in 1949, the songs on the album were traditional folk songs.

When Petty and Holly came to New York, they visited Hester and one night took her to a rock concert at the Brooklyn Paramount Theater where Holly shared the stage with the Everly Brothers, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and the Diamonds. Later, when Coral requested that she record some Christmas songs, Hester enlisted Holly's help with arranging and recording four songs. He brought along his red Stratocaster to play the arrangements. The session included four songs: "Christmas in Killarney", and one song each written by Mr. Hester, Carolyn, and Holly.

No one seems to know where the master tapes for the Coral album and these four songs are, so they have never been re-issued.<sup>5</sup> Holly was a large influence on Hester's guitar playing and song selection.

Her working relationship with Holly was one of mutual respect and admiration. When Holly played the Royal Albert Hall in London in 1958, he surprised the crowds there by being brought up onto the stage playing the piano and singing "Black is the Color," which was one of the traditional songs from Carolyn's album. In September of 2011, Hester returned the compliment by stunning the crowd at the Teatro Bibiena in Mantua, Italy by opening her show with her soaring version of Holly's "Lonesome Tears."<sup>6</sup>

By age 21, Hester was the leading lady of the folk circuit playing about one week a month in the cafes and nightclubs in Greenwich Village which was the heart of the nascent folk movement. In addition, she was playing folk venues in Washington, D.C., Detroit, Philadelphia, and Cambridge. A younger unknown Joan Baez attended one of her concerts in Cambridge, and was allowed to sing a duet with her on stage. Dave van Ronk, nicknamed the "mayor of Greenwich Village", described Hester this way, "Carolyn was electrifying – set of pipes, very, very expressive." "Beauty, talent, charm – she had it all."<sup>7</sup> Her repertoire of traditional American and English ballads along with a sprinkling of Mexican ballads from her Texas background captured the Village's ear. In 1994, she said this about her career, "My participation in the folk movement was based on my love of the music, the melodies that haunt you."<sup>8</sup>

Robert Shelton was a leading cultural critic for the New York Times and the foremost folk music critic of the era. He described Hester as having "a gorgeous voice ... Her voice's range and power were astounding." He fell under her spell, and one night after dinner, they went to the White Horse Tavern for drinks. The White Horse was a predominantly Irish pub in the Village, and that night among the carousers singing at the bar along with Paddy Clancy was a lanky, dark-haired Irish-Cuban with a fiery look in his eye that Shelton pointed out as the aspiring writer Richard Fariña. Later in the evening, Shelton introduced the two. Hester described the moment, "I just was immediately drawn to him. Richard stood out. His eyes were wonderful, and he was very bright, and he could make anyone laugh... He had real magnetism. He said he would come see me the next time I was singing in town."<sup>9</sup>

On May 30, 1960, Hester played the opening night at Gerde's Folk City, and, true to his word, Fariña was there and was mesmerized. His

friend Kirkpatrick Sale described his reaction this way: "It was Dick's nature to find the most attractive thing and go after it. The minute he saw what Carolyn could do and the effect she had on others, he had to have her." Eighteen days later, they were married with a reception afterward held at Shelton's apartment.<sup>10</sup>

Their marriage was a shaky one from the start. Their honeymoon trip to Austin to was financed by returning cars to rental agencies along the route and an impromptu concert by Carolyn in New Orleans.<sup>11</sup> As a wedding present, she gave Richard a handmade Emerson dulcimer and taught him the basics of playing it.<sup>12</sup> He began to develop his own unique style of performing as well. He also began to micromanage her career, how she looked, how she ate, how she dressed, and even insinuating himself into her stage performances on occasion. In return, she helped type the first part of Fariña's novel *Been Down So Long That It Looks Up to Me*.

Carolyn was selected by jazz guitarist Charlie Byrd to host Sunday night folk shows at the Showboat Lounge, his club in Washington, D. C. When Byrd and Stan Getz left to tour Brazil, he asked her to substitute for him along with Mose Allison and Shirley Horn. These shows allowed her to meet, play with, and listen to many of the up and coming folk performers including Mike Seeger, Paul Clayton, and Logan English.<sup>13</sup> During this time, Carolyn recorded her second album for Tradition Records simply titled *Carolyn Hester*, the first of three eponymous albums. In the liner notes, Stacey Williams states that "Carolyn had matched her vocal gifts with the gift of listening."<sup>14</sup> This album features just Carolyn and her guitar and was produced by Paddy Clancy of the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. It includes the first recording one of Carolyn's trademark songs, a multi-octave version of George and Ira Gershwin's "Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess* as well as one of her compositions, "Jaime". It also includes one of the first recordings of "The House of the Rising Sun" by a folk artist. Judy Collins, among others, bought this album and listened to it over and over, especially "She Moves Through the Fair."

In June of 1961, on a cool, rainy afternoon at the Indian Neck Folk Festival in Connecticut, Judy Collins met Carolyn as they both sought some tea to warm themselves up. In 2011, she described this encounter: "Carolyn was strikingly beautiful with shining brown eyes and a chiseled, delicate face. She could have been a movie star. She had a high, sweet voice, a soprano with a kind of quiver that touched your heart

when she sang those heart-wrenching songs that I loved.... She also had a kind of kinetic energy that you could feel.”<sup>15</sup> Carolyn took Judy back to her room to meet her husband, Richard Fariña, who would later play on some of her own albums.

John Hammond, the legendary Columbia producer, signed Carolyn to a contract with Columbia and produced her first sessions with the label. Shortly before the sessions were to begin, Hester and Fariña were in the Boston area, where they met aspiring young singer-songwriter Bob Dylan. In his autobiography, *Chronicles*, Dylan describes his attraction to Hester thus: “Carolyn was eye-catching, down-home and double barrel beautiful. That she had known and worked with Buddy Holly left no small impression on me and I liked being around her. Buddy was royalty, and I felt like she was my connection to it.” He also says of Fariña, “I thought that he was the luckiest guy in the world to be married to Carolyn.”<sup>16</sup> Dylan asked her if she knew of any gigs that he could get. She invited him to play harmonica in her upcoming recording session. John Hammond came by her apartment to see how the rehearsals were going and left pleased with what he heard. Fariña suggested that Carolyn include a blues number on the album. When she admitted that she did not know any, Dylan sang several for her. She chose “Come Back Baby” which Dylan helped her arrange for the session.

The day of the first recording session, Dylan entered the studio in boisterous spirits with a glowing review by Robert Shelton of his performance at the Gaslight the night before in his hip pocket. The other musicians in the studio that day were two black musicians: guitarist Bruce Langhorne and bassist Bill Lee. Bruce Langhorne was well known in the Village for his versatility on guitar and country fiddle. Bill Lee was well known for his work with Odetta, Josh White and other folk and pop performers. His four year old son Spike would grow up to make movies. Both of them would continue to work with Dylan on his acoustic albums. As everyone was leaving, Hammond asked Dylan to stay and offered him a contract with Columbia as well.<sup>17</sup> This was the only session that Dylan was involved with and the others were more somber as Fariña’s insistence upon her strict dieting left Carolyn feeling light-headed and dizzy much of the time.<sup>18</sup>

As Hester’s career was taking off, and she was becoming more confident in herself, Fariña became more controlling and tried to capitalize on his connection to her to make his own fame. Fariña travelled to England to pursue his own singing career, while Carolyn finished the

recording sessions at Columbia. He appeared at several venues and lined up an appearance for them at the Edinburgh Folk Festival scheduled later in the year. After Carolyn joined him in Paris, they went on a picnic with the Baez family, mother Big Joan, Joan, and 16 year old Mimi. Fariña was smitten with Mimi and started flirting with her immediately. After a tempestuous showdown in a Paris hotel, Carolyn told him to pack up and leave while pointing his gun at him, a gun that he had forced her to smuggle into the country.<sup>19</sup> Carolyn flew back to Texas for an appearance in Austin.

Back in Texas, the Hester family had moved once again, this time to Austin where they would stay. Ruth approached local DJ and music producer for the brand new and struggling KHFI-FM radio and television stations, Rod Kennedy, about arranging a local concert for Carolyn. Kennedy was thrilled with the idea and arranged for Carolyn Hester Day to be proclaimed on May 8, 1962 with great fanfare hoping that it would be an album release party for her Columbia album. There were two nights of concerts featuring Carolyn, with two local opening acts, Carolyn's younger brother Dean, and a young couple Tommy [Tiemann] and Sandy [Ewell] fresh from an appearance on the Arthur Godfrey Show on the CBS television network. This author first saw Carolyn Hester on the locally broadcast "Cactus Pryor Show" which promoted this event. Columbia changed the issue date for the album at the last minute, and Kennedy lost thirty-five dollars on the nearly sold out concerts.<sup>20</sup> The good news was that he had formed a new life-long friendship with the Hester family.

After the festivities in Austin, Carolyn flew back to Europe to make the appearance at the Edinburgh Folk Festival and to attempt a reconciliation with Fariña. However, he was hopelessly in love with Mimi, and Carolyn walked out for good. She returned to Texas and found a Juarez attorney to file an uncontested Mexican divorce. Clay Jackson, a mutual friend of theirs, summed up their relationship this way, "Obviously, Richard was working real hard at getting into folk music through Carolyn. The one problem was Carolyn. She wasn't just any girl – she was a Texas girl."<sup>21</sup>

Returning to the Columbia studio in New York in October 1962, Hester recorded a single for Columbia featuring a bilingual version of "Gregorio Cortez" on the B side. In March of 1963, again with John Hammond producing, she recorded a second album, *This Life I'm Living*. Once again it was an album of traditional materials arranged this



time by Milton Okun, who had worked with Harry Belafonte, Paul Robeson, and Cisco Houston and would later work with Peter, Paul, and Mary, and the Chad Mitchell Trio among others. None of the three takes of Holly's "Lonesome Tears" were included on the album.

In Austin, Rod Kennedy continued sponsoring concert appearances for Carolyn that did well and persuaded her to tape a thirteen episode television show for KHFI-TV as well. In 1964, he produced a weeklong series of outdoor concerts staged in Austin's Zilker Park featuring a different style of music each night. The headliners for the first folk concert included Carolyn, John Lomax, Jr., Segle Fry, Mance Lipscomb, and Lightnin' Hopkins.<sup>22</sup> In later years, the series was broken up from being all one week to being scattered throughout the summer with the folk music concert being held on the Fourth of July. In 1972, these summer folk concerts moved to a small town ninety miles away and became the Kerville Folk Festival. Hester, Lomax, Fry, and Lipscomb would be among the headliners for that first show as well. The Festival is still going well and held its forty-first annual show in May, 2012.

In 1963, at the height of the folk music movement, Fred Weintraub, who owned and managed the Bitter End club in Greenwich Village, persuaded ABC television to let him produce a weekly folk music show titled Hootenanny. The show featured concerts recorded at college campuses around the country. Carolyn appeared on the show during the first season and was well received. However during the second season, when the network refused to let Pete Seeger and the Weavers appear on the show, Carolyn became a leader in a boycott of the show, which was supported by most of the major folk acts including the Kingston Trio, Peter, Paul and Mary, and Joan Baez. Even though Pete Seeger encouraged the performers to stop the boycott and appear on the show, Hester refused to do as a matter of principle.<sup>23</sup> In 1964, when the Saturday Evening Post had a major article on the folk music scene, they chose a picture of Carolyn to symbolize the movement on the front cover.

During these years, Hester was active in the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement. In the summer of 1964, she participated in the Mississippi Caravan of Music which was helping Blacks register to vote throughout the state. Traveling with Gil Turner, she drove from New York City to Jackson, Mississippi just a few days after the bodies of civil rights workers Mickey Schwerner, James Chaney and Andy Goodman had been found on August 4. They arrived and checked into a local hotel and left to get supper. While they were gone, someone scrawled KKK across



their room door. They left early the next morning to go to the local coordinating office and get their itinerary. They would spend the week going from town to town staying with local black families, singing songs at homes and churches in the evenings and encouraging people to register and vote during the days. Often they were under the watchful eyes of the local law enforcement officers, the KKK, and angry local white people. The incident has left an indelible impression on her and the rest of the nation. Out of this experience, Hester wrote "Three Young Men" lamenting the death of the young activists that is still a regular part of her repertoire.<sup>24</sup>

With neither Columbia album scoring a major hit, the label quietly dropped her. In 1964 and 1965, Carolyn returned to Clovis, New Mexico so that Norman Petty could produce her next album *That's My Song* for Dot Records. With this album, she began including more current songs, finally recording Holly's "Lonesome Tears", and songs from some of the emerging singer-songwriters, including three by Tom Paxton. In 1999, Paxton described his first encounter with Hester, "I remember coming into the Gaslight Café ... and hearing this ethereal voice floating from the stage. Behind the microphone stood this stunningly beautiful blond girl singing... I postponed breathing until the song was over."<sup>25</sup> For these sessions her backing musicians were the core of the Fireballs, the first nationally known Rock and Roll band from New Mexico, George Tomsco on guitar, Stan Lark on bass, and Doug Roberts on percussion.<sup>26</sup> While they were working together, she taught the Fireballs a song that Paxton had just written and taught her, and in 1968, the Fireball's last Top 10 hit would be their version of that song, "Bottle of Wine."<sup>27</sup>

Her next releases were two live albums on Dot documenting a 1965 Concert at New York's Town Hall which is probably the best presentation of her as a performer. She is accompanied on guitar again by George Tomsco. In this set she included "Outward Bound" by Paxton, "Playboys and Playgirls" by Dylan, her own "Three Young Men", and "That's My Song" by George and Barbara Tomsco alongside more traditional songs such as "The Water is Wide" and "The Jute Mill Girls." These albums were well received and encouraged John Hammond to sign Carolyn to Columbia Records once again.

As the British Invasion was sweeping most of the folk acts away, Hammond chose John Simon to produce her next sessions at Columbia. Simon attempted to update her sound by including more instrumentation and more current songs including the Beatles' "Penny Lane" and Ravi

Shankar's "Majhires", with Shankar himself included in the session. Later, she admitted that she never felt comfortable with the results, and could not see a way for her to continue musically in this vein. Columbia released two singles from these sessions, and the rest of these recordings went unreleased until 1995 when Bear Family Records of Germany released them in a comprehensive two CD set titled *Dear Companion*. Columbia quietly dropped her again.<sup>28</sup>

In 1967, Rod Kennedy and Raymondville born folk singer Allen Damron, opened a folk music club in downtown Austin, called the Chequered Flag. Kennedy displayed his personal collection of vintage racing cars, while Damron emceed hosting the national folk acts of the day as well as introducing many new young Texas performers including Ray Wylie Hubbard and Townes Van Zandt. To boost the club's reputation, Kennedy arranged for Hester to play there with Damron several times. The first time that she appeared, Damron wore a suit and tie all week, much to the amazement and amusement of the regular customers.<sup>29</sup>

For a few years, Hester tried to get into the folk-rock scene with the Carolyn Hester Coalition, a group which included her new husband, David Blume. Blume was a jazz pianist and organist best known for his composition of "Turn Down Day" that had been a Top 20 hit for the soft rock group The Cyrkle in 1966. The Coalition recorded two albums for the Metromedia label that again showed an uncomfortable attempt to be more modern. The best cuts were the traditional ballad "East Virginia" and Ed McCurdy's "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream". Neither album sold well, and the Coalition soon disbanded. .

In 1973, she released her third eponymous album this time in Quadraphonic on the RCA label. This one showed more Country-Western and West Coast singer-songwriter influences and backing by major Los Angeles session players including Larry Carlton, Hal Blaine, Joe Osborn, and Larry Knechtel. The song selection included more modern tunes including songs by Elton John, Lobo, and Sonny Curtis. In addition the album showcased Hester's songwriting with three songs including a moving tribute to her younger mentally challenged sister Donna as well as that of her husband David Blume with his "I Have a Dream", written on the night of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination. However, with no standout songs or hits from the album, it was soon relegated to the cut-out bins.

During this time, Carolyn and Blume moved to Los Angeles, where they opened an international dance club and set about raising two daugh-

ters. He eventually became a feature writer for the Los Angeles Times. For the next ten years, she limited her performing almost exclusively to the Kerrville Folk Festival and its related spin offs.

The first Kerrville Folk Festival was held in the Kerrville City Auditorium in May, 1972, and Hester was one of the twelve headliners. In addition to performing there over 35 times, she also served on the board of directors which initially helped to give the Festival wider recognition among the national folk community. Rod Kennedy describes Carolyn's appearance at the 1973 Festival, "Carolyn followed the exciting audience-involved performance of the Royal Lights [an Austin-based Black gospel group], she was a study in quiet, commanding grace. The mood, the ambiance, and pace of the evening suddenly became one of gentle introspect and quiet beauty, ranging from the poignancy of her song "My Little Sister Donna" to the multi-octave soaring beauty of ... 'Summertime.'" <sup>30</sup> The author saw Hester repeat this feat in September of that same year at An Evening at the Kerrville Folk Festival held in Austin's Civic Auditorium. She participated in many of the Kerrville bus tours that travelled to many Texas cities and eventually reached out to Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco and even Alaska spreading and promoting Texas music all over the nation. Hester and Blume helped make some of the arrangements for the Los Angeles tour. She appears repeatedly on the recorded highlights of the Festivals for the first ten years. <sup>31</sup>

Through these activities and appearances at Kerrville, Hester has influenced many younger performers, including one young woman, who first met her at an Austin concert a decade earlier, Nanci Griffith. When Hester began to tour nationally again in 1982, she took Griffith along as her opening act. She and her husband David Blume produced and self-released two albums in the mid-1980s which showcased their combined songwriting skills. *Warriors of the Rainbow* is dedicated to the Native American People and the Rainbow Way. It celebrated their ways and beliefs in song and protested the devastation of their lands. Through her Kerrville activities, Carolyn had gotten to know Houston-based singer-songwriter Bobby Bridger whose specialty is the frontier West and Indian lore. He won the New Folk Performer award at the first Kerrville Folk Festival. While on one of the "Kerrville on the Road" bus tours in the early 1980s, she became interested in Indians, and Bridger shared lists of books and accounts of his personal friendship with Vine Deloria, Jr. and others. During one trip, he dubbed her *Ascending Woman* for the times that they would leave her at airports to fly home. <sup>32</sup> He summed up

their relationship thus: "The person on that bill [the first Kerrville Folk Festival headliners] that I wanted most to meet was Carolyn Hester. ... We somehow failed to connect at the festival, ... it would be years before I got to know her. What a genuine old-fashioned sweetheart she proved to be!"<sup>33</sup>

As the 1990's rolled around, renewed recognition came to Carolyn Hester. Bob Dylan invited her to appear at his 30th anniversary concert, where Carolyn and Nanci Griffith performed a duet of "Boots of Spanish Leather. At the close of the concert, she gave Dylan a bouquet of flowers. In 1993, and again in 1998, Nanci Griffith invited Hester to sing on her Grammy-award winning albums *Other Voice*, *Other Rooms* and its follow-up *Other Voices, Too* (A Trip Back to Bountiful). On the first album, she and Griffith performed a duet of, Paxton's "Can't Help But Wonder Where I'm Bound." On the second album, Carolyn joined Griffith and Emmylou Harris in singing "Yarrington Town" featuring Carolyn's and Emmylou's daughters as back-up singers. The recording engineer, Jim Rooney, said that when he mixed the tapes he had a hard time telling which voice was whose. Since the song has a mother-daughter theme, Griffith and Rooney had planned to let the daughters do most of the singing, but then chose instead to use their mothers' "original scratch vocals – the voices you set down when you are recording the song, if the people aren't there who will do the final version."<sup>34</sup>

In 1995, Carolyn and Tom Paxton toured the United Kingdom and Italy together to much acclaim. During this tour, Carolyn connected with the British label The Road Goes On Forever which has re-issued her 1960 *Tradition* album Carolyn Hester on CD with four newly recorded songs, and her two 1980s albums on one CD as *Texas Songbird* in 1994. In 1999, they also released two new albums by her. *From These Hills* explores her roots with self-penned songs including "the Flatlands of Texas", "The Little Girl Who Saved America" (about Jackie Kennedy), and "Nanci's Song" along with Richard Fariña's "Pack Up Your Sorrows", and Tom Paxton's "The Name of Trees", a song about Alzheimer's. The second album is a tribute to Tom Paxton featuring a dozen of his songs, both old and new.

Since 2000, Carolyn Hester has continued to perform and to gain renewed recognition. In 2002, she appeared as a major character in David Hajdu's book *Positively 4th Street*, a joint biography of Bob Dylan, Richard Fariña, Joan Baez, and Mimi Baez which has led some to reassess her place in the folk music movement. In 2008, the *World Folk Music*

Association recognized her with their Lifetime Achievement Award. In late, 2009, her daughters Amy and Karla Blume produced her new album *We Dream Forever* which shows that Hester has retained her distinctive voice and style with a mixture of older songs and new material including songs written by Amy and Karla who are featured as singers on the album as well. One of its highlights is a new version of Ed McCurdy's "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream" with a final verse penned by Hester. Sirius/XM Radio recently requested Carolyn's permission to use this song in a special tribute show for McCurdy.<sup>35</sup>

At a time when many of her cohorts are no longer active, Carolyn Hester continues to perform and to be active as she wishes. In September of 2011, she toured Italy, playing in the Teatro Bibiena that Mozart had played at age fourteen.<sup>36</sup> In March 2012, Carolyn Hester appeared at the People's Voice Café in New York City, and in May, she and the Shaw Brothers hosted a cruise to Bermuda.<sup>37</sup> She has done it her way, quietly and assuredly, confident of her talents and skills. She is widely recognized by her peers for her fine interpretations of traditional and contemporary songs as well as a being a fine songwriter on her own. She has recognized and encouraged talent in others around her and continues to share her gifts and talents with the world.

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